



Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries

Commissioner John McMillan

24th Annual Nonpoint Source Conference

DATA

- Our stakeholders must have an accurate inventory of our state's water resources before we move forward with statewide water policy to ensure that water is available for agriculture in times of stress
- There must be adequate funding available for comprehensive, unbiased data collection

IRRIGATION

- Increasing the number of irrigated acres in Alabama is not only important to agriculture, but also to our state's rural economy. When you compare Alabama's irrigated acres with other southern state, Alabama ranks at the bottom as shown by the list below:
 1. Arkansas 4.46 million acres
 2. Florida 1.55 million acres
 3. Mississippi 1.37 million acres
 4. Georgia 1.02 million acres
 5. Alabama 112.819 acres

- If Alabama reached 500,000 acres of irrigated land, it would mean approximately 13,000 new jobs, producing a positive economic impact in the rural areas of the state where we need it most.
- Efforts have been made to increase Alabama's irrigated acres. The Alabama Universities Irrigation Initiative has completed extensive research and developed a blueprint for sustainable irrigation in Alabama; federal funds have been secured through USDA to assist farmers in building irrigation ponds; and legislation has been passed creating a tax credit incentive program to help more Alabama farmers manage the impacts of drought.
- Any water management plan should include a comprehensive and long range plan for irrigation needs.

Best Management Practices

- Stakeholders strongly support state programs to conserve soil and water
- Stakeholders urges research and educational programs to develop and promote Best Management Practices to conserve and protect Alabama's water resources which are critical not only to Alabama's farmers, but to everyone in the state.

Property Rights

- Stakeholders believes in the protection of property rights
- Water use rights for Alabama landowners are supported by stakeholders

Any state water resources management plan should include policies and guidance for water resources development and reservoir planning programs

These policies should:

- Encourage regional planning in water source development
- Encourage the exploration of public/private partnership
- Identify potential reservoir sites, in conjunction with local authorities and planning agencies; and
- Encourage the development of off-stream storage for water supply needs to minimize impacts to major rivers and streams

Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority

- Created by the Alabama Legislature (PL 91-602) for the purpose of managing and protecting watersheds at the “grass roots” level in areas of: water quantity; water quality; flood control; and water conservation education

- Focus – gaining knowledge of water resources in the 10 southeastern Alabama counties and understanding their local water issues
- More water resource data available for southeast Alabama than any other area of state as a result of unprecedented hydrological Studies
- Only area of the state where all aquifers are mapped

- Only area of the state with completed water availability assessment
- Only area of the state with the deepest public water supply well (Ozark) as a direct result of a cooperative study project with the GSA
- Only area of the state with a basin-wide Flood Warning System - 20 rain and river gauges in 8 counties (operated and maintained by the CPYRWMA)
- AWARD-WINNING – Winner of the EPA Gulf of Mexico 2001 *Gulf Guardian* award for its “*Unpaved Roads Erosion and Sediment Control Project – A Guideline for Maintenance and Service of Unpaved Roads*”

PARTNERS

Geological Survey of Alabama

Dept. of Agriculture and Industries

Office of Water Resources

ADECA

ADEM

Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Area RC&D Councils

Auburn University

University of Alabama

Troy University

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Weather Service

State Climatologist

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mobile District

Alabama Clean Water Partnership

Alabama Legislature

Cities and Counties of southeast Alabama

Non-Governmental Organizations